

Vol II Issue VIII Feb 2013

Impact Factor : 0.1870

ISSN No :2231-5063

Monthly Multidisciplinary
Research Journal

Golden Research

Thoughts

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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“REGIONALISM IN INDIAN POLITICS”

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Abstract:

A region is a defined territorial unit including particular language or languages, jatis, ethnic groups or tribes, particular social settings and cultural pattern, folk arts etc. “A region is a profound sociological fact reflected in its beings treated as the nuclear of a social aggregation for multiple purposes. In the vocabulary of a sovereign state, it generally denotes a territory which is smaller than itself but is larger than its single constituent units, variously called states, provinces, cantons, etc. what precise factors more pre-exist before a tract of territory could be called a region, is neither as yet fully known, nor can be firmly predicted. What is known is that several variables most be in simultaneous inter-play in varying degrees over a considerable period of time which, then, set a particular territory apart from other areas: geography, topography, region, customs and mores, political and economic stage of development, way of living, commonly shared historical experience, etc.

KEYWORDS

Regionalism, Politics, separateness, territorial, characterized.

INTRODUCTION

The word 'et-cetera' is significant, says Shriram Maheshwari, Regionalism, to be sure, needs all these ingredients, but the concept is much more inclusive – when all is said and done, it remains at least partially elusive. The essential fact is that a region is characterized, more than anything else, by a widely shared statement of 'togetherness' in the people, internalized from a wide variety of sources, which might even include common prosperity, camaraderie developed in a common struggle, etc., and what is more 'separateness' from others. At the centre of regionalism is a more or less intense sense of identity having both positive and negative dimension which is no less real to the people than the feeling of belonging to a particular state or nation to a language group. Yogesh Atal characterized regionalism as essentially a political phenomenon very analogous to the phenomenon of nationalism and added that regionalism is an example of micro – nationalism and a region provides a meaningful frame for overlapping interaction of several social processes and thereby cemented unity instead of disintegration.

One of the most significant aspect of the Indian polity is that it is an aggregation of region and sub-regions. Those regions and sub-regions have distinct social-cultural personality within the framework of the seven natural regions of India.

Parochialism and regionalism is a conspicuous phenomenon of India's political life. The mushroom growth of private political aims in the form of the Shiva Sena in Maharashtra, and many other similar organizations, big or small, operating in different states of the Indian union reflected 'parochialism'

Title : “REGIONALISM IN INDIAN POLITICS”
Source: Golden Research Thoughts [2231-5063] SHIVAPUTRA S. BEDJIRGE yr:2013 vol:2 iss:8

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Why did regionalism emerged largely due to four factors. First and fore most among these was the problem of economic and social development of Indian society. After independence, India lacked a balanced economic growth of all regions. Instead of caring for the interests of the country as a whole, political leadership become narrow minded and began to clamour for the progress of their own state and region.

For example the last decades have witnessed an intense regional disparities. The most commonly applied test of relative backwardness is the difference in the capital income.

Closely connected was the increasing awareness of the people in the more backward parts of India that they were being neglected in the matter of education and job opportunities, in the setting of the Plants factories, in the construction of dams and bridges, and above all, in the allocation of central funds and grants.

The third factor that gave rise to regional and parochial tendencies in the country was the personal and selfish ends of the politicians. The weakening of the central authority and in some cases of the state authority was considered by the regional and state leaders of all parties as vital to enhancing their own authority power, and they did not hesitate from propagating regionalism among the people. Moreover, the creation of more and more states meant more governors; more chief ministers, more ministers and more MLAs and these were what the politicians in India cared for. Thus the narrow and sectarian instincts of the ignorant masses were at times stirred up by the professional politicians to serve their own narrow ends.

The fourth factor was the creation of linguistic states which reinforced regionalism and stirred demands for increased state autonomy. Very often the sub-nationalism sentiment which is initially based on linguistic, religious or ethnic groupings gains strength with a blend of economic issues such as those relating to land, water and regional backwardness. One of the most significant developments has been the rise of linguistic chauvinism, re-arrangement of the boundaries of the states on linguistic basis, imposition of the language of the majority in a state on the minorities and disregard of the special provision relating to language spoken by a section of the population of a state, resulting in fissiparous tension.

Discussing the question of 'linguistic regionalism' which had even sparked of a wave of riots in recent times, K.C.Pande maintained that while these riots and inter regional rivalries were ostensibly motivated by linguistic loyalties, the real forces operating behind such movements as ShivaSena, etc., stemmed from economic frustration of the people in one area being deprived of employment opportunities or being unable to compete with outsiders in this sphere. language, Pande remarks, in such cases only provide a convenient cloak for the deep-seated economic maladies and added that the same held good for religion also because most of the so-called 'communal riots' were also rooted in economic maladjustment as in the case of recent riots in different parts where economic tension and not religious differentials trigger communal violence.

Analyzing the geographical location and concentration of tribes, Proffesor Moonis Raza maintained that the Indian tribal population is regional and gives rise to regionalism as the tribal people, who were gradually pushed into 'refuge' areas lying on the border or periphery, are now beginning to press its urge for redressal of the historical injustices.

Regionalism is a country-wide phenomenon, and often, it took the form of well-conceived and well-organized agitations and campaigns. All most every state has spawned a militant native movement directed against outsiders. The fundamental issue has been employment for local people, and many state governments, either officially or unofficially, have supported the protection of jobs for the 'sons of the soil'. Of the movements, the most virulent has been the ShivaSena, founded in 1966 in Bombay. Exploiting Maharastrian grievances and economic frustration, the Shiva Sena, under the banner of 'Maharastria for the Maharastrians' has directed its attack, both verbal and physical, primarily at South Indian immigrants. Regionalism in India has assumed various forms and found expression in more than one way. It assumed four forms in the political field: (1) Secession from the Indian union', (2) Demand for separate statehood, (3) Demand for full-fledged statehood: and (4) Inter-state disputes.

Thus the spirit of our Constitution is secular. But in practice it has been distorted. Our great political leaders have given a totally different meaning to secularism. The greater danger to secularism In our country is that communal political parties are allowed to exist and openly participate in the political process on the one hand, the state claims to be secular on the other it enters into agreements with communal parties. religion plays a significant role in elections. To conclude, it may be said that in their supreme wisdom the framers of our Constitution made India a secular state in the strict sense of the term, but our present day political leaders are following policies which are bound to undermine the principle of secularism. Already much danger has been inflicted on our secular policy.

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